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**P R E S S 35/00 (PRESSE 92) RELEASE**

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on Mr Birdal's re-imprisonment**

The European Union regrets the fact that Mr Birdal was detained again. The renewed detention of Mr Birdal constitutes a serious setback for the freedom of expression in Turkey and it is not in accordance with the spirit of the Helsinki conclusions.

The European Union urges the Turkish Government to take measures to release Mr Birdal on humanitarian grounds and stresses that while he remains in prison, adequate medical treatment should be provided.

The European Union is closely monitoring the political and human rights developments in Turkey and recalls, in the context of the Copenhagen criteria for accession to the European Union, the importance of respect for the rule of law and international standards of human rights.

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